



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Col. Antoinette Gant
Commander, South Pacific Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102

Re: Oakland Harbor Turning Basins Widening, Alameda County, California

Dear Colonel Gant:

As discussed at our March 7, 2022 meeting, I am pleased to hear that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is considering use of an electric dredge for the Oakland Harbor Turning Basins Widening Project. This commitment is especially important given the project location within the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin, which faces some of the worst air quality in the country. If USACE ultimately chooses to widen only the Outer Harbor basin, or decides to widen both Inner and Outer Harbor basins, it is important that electric dredge be a commitment accompanying the project. Consistent with our Draft EA comments, we continue to recommend that an Outer Harbor Only Alternative with electric dredges also be fully analyzed in the NEPA analysis for this project. Through use of an electric, rather than a diesel dredge, USACE can directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and diesel exhaust-related health effects of project-related dredging. These activities are in line with Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (1994) and Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (2021) which collectively direct all federal agencies to achieve environmental justice as a part of their missions by developing programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionately high and adverse impacts on human health, environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts on these communities, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts.

The communities of West Oakland nearest to the Port of Oakland have been historically, and are currently, burdened by disproportionate environmental impacts. During cooperating agency meetings for this project, and in EPA's Draft Environmental Assessment comment letter, my staff highlighted concerns regarding the project's potential impacts to low-income and minority populations who live near the project area. The historic burden from disproportionate environmental impacts on the residents of West Oakland have been from multiple sources of pollution, including from port operations. I recently had an opportunity to meet with community members, including members of the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP), who raised concerns about poor air quality and other environmental impacts in the project area. I strongly encourage USACE to continue coordinating with the adjacent impacted community, including WOEIP, to fully understand the community impacts from increasing efficiency of larger vessels arriving at the Port, and to identify further measures to reduce future impacts caused by growth of port operations which the project will facilitate.

My staff will be reaching out to USACE San Francisco District to schedule a joint meeting with WOEIP to discuss their concerns. I encourage you to have staff from South Pacific Division attend those meetings. This will provide additional opportunities for meaningful engagement and collaborative identification of additional measures that may be taken to promote better environmental outcomes in the area. Thank you in advance for supporting USACE's continued community engagement throughout this, and all future planning processes, to ensure ample time to incorporate feedback into the project and commit to robust outreach approaches and active engagement.

I look forward to continued engagement with you, and my staff will be in touch to set up quarterly meetings. In the meantime, I was pleased to hear that our staff have started to share best practices around engagement with over-burdened communities. If you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to call, or your staff may contact Morgan Capilla at (415) 972-3504, or capilla.morgan@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Martha Guzman
Aceves

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Martha Guzman
Regional Administrator

cc: Cheree Peterson, Army Corps of Engineers, South Pacific Division
Lt. Col. Kevin P. Arnett, Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District